

PATENT

2694-0131P



IN THE U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appl. No.:

ROJAS-CHAPANA, Jose et al. Conf.:

Appl. No.:

09/744,809

Group: UNASSIGNED

Filed:

January 30, 2001

Examiner: UNASSIGNED

For:

A PROCESS FOR THE MICROBIAL LEACHING OF
SULFIDIC MATERIALS, AND THE USE OF
SULFUR-CONTAINING AMINO ACIDS IN SAID
MICROBIAL LEACHING

L E T T E R

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

April 30, 2001

Sir:

Subsequent to the filing of the above-identified application on January 30, 2001, attached hereto is an English translation of the International Preliminary Examination Report (IPEA 409) which should be made of record in the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

MAY 29 2001

By Joe McKinney Muncy
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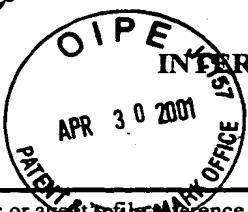
Translation

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)



Applicant's or agent's reference P54598PC-Zie	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/EP99/05272	International filing date (day/month/year) 23 July 1999 (23.07.99)	Priority date (day/month/year) 30 July 1998 (30.07.98)
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC C22B 3/18		
Applicant HAHN-MEITNER-INSTITUT BERLIN GMBH		

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.
2. This REPORT consists of a total of 4 sheets, including this cover sheet.

This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of _____ sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I Basis of the report
- II Priority
- III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV Lack of unity of invention
- V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI Certain documents cited
- VII Certain defects in the international application
- VIII Certain observations on the international application

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Date of submission of the demand 10 February 2000 (10.02.00)	Date of completion of this report 24 May 2000 (24.05.2000)
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/EP	Authorized officer
Facsimile No.	Telephone No.

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/EP99/05272

I. Basis of the report

1. This report has been drawn on the basis of (*Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to the report since they do not contain amendments.*):

 the international application as originally filed. the description, pages 1-6, as originally filed,

pages _____, filed with the demand,

pages _____, filed with the letter of _____

pages _____, filed with the letter of _____

 the claims, Nos. 1-8, as originally filed,

Nos. _____, as amended under Article 19,

Nos. _____, filed with the demand,

Nos. _____, filed with the letter of _____

Nos. _____, filed with the letter of _____

 the drawings, sheets/fig 1/1, as originally filed,

sheets/fig _____, filed with the demand,

sheets/fig _____, filed with the letter of _____

sheets/fig _____, filed with the letter of _____

2. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

 the description, pages _____ the claims, Nos. _____ the drawings, sheets/fig _____

3. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).

4. Additional observations, if necessary:

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.
PCT/EP 99/05272

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Claims	1-8	YES
	Claims		NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims	1-8	YES
	Claims		NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims	1-8	YES
	Claims		NO

2. Citations and explanations

This report makes reference to the following document:

D1: US-A-2 829 964.

Claim 1 is restricted in relation to D1.

In comparison with the method known from D1, the invention addresses the problem of providing a leaching method with enhanced disintegration rate which does not uses any environmentally harmful additives.

The subject matter of Claim 1 is therefore novel (PCT Article 33(2)).

In order to solve said problem, the invention uses a leaching liquid containing an amino acid selected from cysteine, methionine, derivatives or mixtures of these compounds.

This solution is neither known from nor suggested by the prior art.

Consequently, the subject matter of Claim 1 also meets the inventive step requirement of PCT Article 33(3), and is also industrially applicable (PCT Article 33(4)).

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Claims 2-8 are dependent on Claim 1 and therefore also meet the PCT requirements.

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